

## 1916 Berthier French Fusil Mle 1907/15-M16

During World War I, a modified version of the 3-round clip *Mle* 1907 rifle called *Fusil Mle 1907/15* was manufactured in large numbers (altogether 435,000 rifles) and issued to colonial troops, to the French Foreign Legion and to many minor allies.

It was also issued to some French regular infantry regiments after 1916 in order to bring relief to an endemic shortage of the Lebel rifle although well over 2 million Lebel rifles had already been produced between 1887 and 1917. Both the MAS (Manufacture d'armes de Saint-Étienne) and the MAC (Manufacture d'armes de Châtellerauld) were the principal state contractors for the *Mle* 1907/15 rifle.

In combat service, most infantrymen found the Berthier rifles and carbines, with their one-piece stocks and fast-loading *en bloc* magazine, to be an improvement. However, the limited ammunition capacity of the Berthier *Mle* 1907/15's magazine (3 rounds) was viewed as a great disadvantage by troops in close contact with the enemy or participating in assaults or trench raids.

In response, French military authorities introduced a modified Berthier rifle in 1916, designated *Fusil Mle 1907/15-M16* but generally called the 1916 rifle (*Fusil Modele 1916*). The new rifle had a re-designed magazine well, which now could hold "en-bloc" clips with a 5-round capacity, though they would still accept the original 3-round chargers. These rifles saw service in all branches of the French army mostly after 1918. The *Mle* 1916 Berthier infantry rifle only appeared on the front lines in small numbers during the late summer of 1918. With its greater cartridge capacity, it was better received than the *Mle* 1907/15 rifle and later became widely issued to infantry troops during the post-war years after their production had intensified. Nevertheless, some commanders continued to lobby for reissuance of the older *Mle* 1886/M93 Lebel for their infantry troops.



WW1 French Berthier bayonet



French soldier with “Mousqueton Berthier Mle 1892/M16”

<b>Type</b>	Bolt-action rifle
<b>Place of origin</b>	France
<b>Service history</b>	
<b>In service</b>	1890–1960s
<b>Production history</b>	
<b>Designer</b>	Emile Berthier
<b>No. built</b>	2,000,000+
<b>Specifications</b>	
<b>Mass</b>	4.195 kg (9.25 lb) 1907/15-M16

<b>Length</b>	1,306 mm (51.4 in)
<b>Barrel length</b>	803 mm (31.6 in)
<b>Cartridge</b>	8x50R mm
<b>Caliber</b>	8mm
<b>Action</b>	Bolt action
<b>Muzzle velocity</b>	701 m/s (2,300 ft/s)
<b>Feed system</b>	3-or 5-round magazine(M16/M34), clip fed